

Generic Name: Valproic Acid or Divalproex Sodium
Brand Name: Epival Depakene

What Is It Used For?

- Decreasing seizure activity in various types of seizures; a broad spectrum anticonvulsant.
- May be given intravenously in the emergency department for status epilepticus.

How Long Does The Oral Medicine Take To Work?

- 2-5 days

What Are The Important Safety Concerns?

- When first starting the medicine, your child may be slightly drowsy and/or dizzy.
- Only adjust the dosage as recommended by your health care provider. They will usually increase this medication slowly to avoid side effects. Never increase the dosage more than **once per week** unless directed otherwise.
- Once you have started with one brand of the medication stay with it. Avoid switching between different brands.
- Check with your pharmacist before taking herbal medications and/or over-the-counter medications. They may have adverse effects if taken with anti-seizure medications.
- Do not stop taking this medication suddenly because this could result in seizures.

Does My Child Need Bloodwork With This Medication?

- A blood test may be done before starting this medication to check your child's liver function and blood counts. If the blood tests are normal, it is very safe for your child to take this medication.
- Routine blood work may be done to help determine the best dosage for your child, and also if they have side effects to the medication.
- If your child is required to have blood work it must be done **BEFORE** they get their medication. This is called a trough level. This level usually falls between 350 and 700.

What Are The Possible Side Effects?

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| • Abdominal Pain* | • Nausea & Vomiting* | • Tremors |
| • Constipation* | • Rash* | • Unsteadiness |
| • Increased Appetite* | • Weight Gain* | • Hair Loss |
| • Diarrhea* | • Headache* | • Liver Problems |
| • Dizziness* | • Heartburn* | • Increased Bruising |
| • Double Vision* | • Drowsiness* | • Irregular Periods |

* more common side effects

How Do I Give The Medication?

- Give tablets or capsules whole by mouth.
- Give with food or milk to reduce stomach upset and/or to improve the taste if needed. Do not give with an antacid medication.
- Give your child the medication as close to the same time as possible each day and only the amount prescribed.
- If your child misses a dose, give the dose as soon as you remember or can. If the next dose of the medicine needs to be given in less than 4 hours, do **not** give the dose you forgot. Give the next dose a little earlier and then return to giving the medicine at the usual times after that.
- If your child vomits within 30 minutes of taking the medication, repeat the dose.
- If your child vomits after 30 minutes of taking the medication, do not repeat the dose.

What Medications May Alter The Effectiveness Of This Drug?

- Phenobarbital (Phenobarb) or Primidone (Mysoline)- may make your child more sleepy than usual.
- Phenytoin (Dilantin) - causes Phenytoin to act stronger than it would if it was given without Valproic Acid.
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol) - may cause this medication to act stronger if given with Valproic Acid

When Do I Call My Health Care Provider?

Call your health care provider or go to your nearest emergency room if you are concerned about your child in any way. With Valproic Acid the following would be of concern:

- A rash
- A change in seizure pattern
- Bleeding when brushing teeth (pink staining on toothbrush)
- Bruising
- Pale colored bowel movements
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Tiny purple spots on skin

What Are The Available Forms And Dosages?

Valproic Acid
250 mg Capsule
500 mg Capsule
250mg/5ml Syrup
*cannot crush or cut capsule

Divalproex Sodium
125 mg Tablet
250 mg Tablet
500 mg Tablet
*can crush/cut tablet

It is important to keep a record of your child's seizures and side effects to determine how well they are responding to the medication. **Please bring these records to all clinic appointments**

Always bring all your child's medications to every clinic appointment